



## **WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL**

**Project ID:** 2002MA3B

**Title:** The Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership

**Project Type:** Information Transfer

**Focus Categories:** Water Quality, Non Point Pollution, Surface Water

**Keywords:** Citizen Monitoring, Non-point Pollution, Rivers, Lakes, Monitoring, Volunteer, Quality Control

**Start Date:** 03/01/2002

**End Date:** 02/28/2005

**Federal Funds Requested:** \$21,954

**Non-Federal Matching Funds Requested:** \$11,987

**Congressional District:** 1st Hampshire

**Principal Investigator:**

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**Abstract**

Statement of critical regional or State water problem.

The Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership (MassWWP) was formed in 1990 to empower citizens to collect, evaluate, and act on scientifically credible water quality information for the Commonwealth's surface waters. To accomplish this task, we rely on building a partnership with government, industry, educators, conservation organizations and the general public, who lend their respective talents to this effort to achieve practical solutions to water quality problems. The program has grown from working with 15 groups in 1990 to over 80 today. Funded principally through grants from foundations and industry and membership fees until 1999, the program was most recently funded principally through contracts with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), supplemented by grants from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) and others. MWWP has become an inherent part of the new state policy on lake and pond management, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' (EOEA) encouragement of citizen water quality monitoring, the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Quality Assurance Program Plan directive, and the statewide Watershed Initiative. MWWP has also been instrumental in improving coordination between citizen monitoring in the New England states and nationwide. In New England, MWWP was the organizer of the New England Regional Monitoring Consortium, originally funded by a USGS regional competition grant and subsequently supported by EPA New England, to produce a variety of materials of common use by volunteer water quality monitoring programs. MWWP also plays a key role in the New England Chapter of the North American Lake Management Society, the EPA sponsored national meeting of Water Quality Monitors, and the Massachusetts Coalition of Lakes and Ponds. As the interest of citizens in protecting and improving their water resources grows, it is critical that long term continuity of basic technical support is seamless.

Methodology: MassWWP services fall into several broad categories:

- 1) Workshop and conference series, which trains volunteers and promotes information sharing on the major aspects of planning and running a monitoring program, from program planning to field and laboratory methods to data management and presentation.
- 2) Partnership and network building to foster productive relationships among volunteer groups and between volunteer programs and governments, business, and other interests.
- 3) Special projects on specific issues, such as satellite imagery and a nationwide Secchi disk survey.
- 4) Research on topics that have potential to enhance the utility of volunteer monitoring programs.
- 5) Consultation and advice, loan of sampling equipment, and other direct services.
- 6) Conferences. MassWWP regularly presents papers and workshops or helps plan water monitoring related conferences around New England and the nation.
- 7) Publications. Development and/or distribution of documents of use to volunteer monitors.
- 8) Statewide Coordinator and Western Massachusetts Service Provider. A principal task of the EOEAs support is to provide statewide coordination of citizen water quality monitoring and guide the four current regional service providers. The Water Watch Partnership is also one of the designated regional service providers, covering western Massachusetts.

Information being collected by volunteer water quality groups meets state and federal agency data quality requirements for use of the data. As a result, adherence to MWWP certified procedures helps insure the success of EOEAs sponsored projects in a \$500,000 annual program in support of community lake and river projects, provides critical data to the DEP TMDL program, the DEP 305B report, and the watershed projects developed by EOEAs Watershed Team Leaders who work with citizen groups, communities and business.